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Richard Ballard

Loss of Apathy

The clean-up has begun in the rooms
where most of the bodies fell.

Old men are teaching young men how to use
carpet shampooers and floor buffers.

The women wrap bandages, cook soup,
give birth, grow old, die.

The paratroopers land soon after
the final statements are made.

A man shaves his wife.
we make allowances for that.

You show up with careless hair and depilated
eyebrows, a monster in little girl's clothes.

I wonder if you really came, or is your
presence a trick, cheapened by my believing it?

Some children play with a ball on the stairs.
Above their heads in a closet someone is crying.

The children do not yet feel the loss.
This is all that anyone remembers.

Richard Peabody, Jr.

Lost Causes

From my window in the Hamilton Arms, I can see Larry McMurtry selling a leather-bound volume to a woman with blue hair. A cow skull is pinned to the wall behind him.

I dreamt about Erin again last night. We hung suspended from wires. A performance of *Einstein's Armageddon*. She wore purple and black. I wore a red jerkin. Bodies hung above and below. When she danced her blonde hair stole the show. Voices came up behind me. My pursuers. I turned to run. Woke up.

The woman has left the store now. McMurtry is seated back behind his desk with his cowboy boots propped up on a stool. He is cleaning his glasses. I can hear the woman walking through the alley below, enroute to Wisconsin Avenue.

I used to drive by Erin's house every few days, like a high school kid, just to see if she was home. No way of really knowing. She's got two sisters and a brother so the lights are always on. I had considered hiding in the bushes but had already made a big enough ass of myself. You can't force someone to love you. God knows. Still, sitting behind the wheel cruising past like that, I felt closer to her.

When I think about how close I came to winning her. Or thinking I did. It makes me panic. What would I have done if I had? Nine years is a lot of difference when the girl is 16. Still, it runs in my family. My grandfather was 40 and his bride 19.

Once when the family was away I broke into her house. Sounds crazy, I know, but I had to do something. There, in the darkness, I imagined her sleeping. I wanted to be there when she opened her eyes. Those green eyes are her best feature.

McMurtry is closing up now. Locking the door. Making the short walk down 31st street and up the black staircase to the annex where he sometimes hides away. I've heard he's finally writing about Washington.

In the darkness, the house breathed Erin's name. Her deep Lauren Hutton voice permeated the wood. I mimicked her fluid movements across the oak floor. Remembered when she wanted me.

The streetlights have come on now. Rush hour hums away. Washington is doing its mercury sunset dance.

I almost ran away with her one time. I'd imagined it. We met on a

rooftop, and the instant when I came up behind her, and kissed her, I thought I could run her to the car and vanish. What in the world would I have done? A writer with no job? No prospects? Not the faintest idea where to go? Or what to do? Except to cleave to her as though she were my salvation, as though her magic would shelter me.

My tea is cold now. The cat is making noise about going out, and I have to think about eating soon. But not yet. I'm sitll picking scabs. Wallowing in my defeat.

My friends did everything they could to prevent my knowing Erin. I will never forgive them. If just once, one of them had said something...anything. It doesn't matter. I managed to self-destruct every time I had the opportunity.

McMurtry is stirring some chili on the back burner in the tiny kitchen at the back of the anex. He's made a success of writing about failure. Lots of books and screenplays. Writing book reviews for the *Washington Star* and film criticism for *American Film*. Sometimes I wonder whether or not he envied Hud. Whether or not he ever wanted that heartless detachment.

After Erin's mother chased me out. After I slept with the one woman she told me not to. And the bug was in her ear. I kicked myself for forfeiting love and getting sex -- like Tom Jones winding up with Diane Cilento instead of his blonde-haired Sophie. The worst thing of all was sleeping with somebody else and talking about her. I still do it. Bothering other women with Erin tales.

"You can't love a dream," one told me. But I do.

She has the special something that will make her a success. I spotted that the first day we met. Mistook it for something more. Of course this is all lies. My friends think I made up the fact that she liked me. Or even knew I existed. They say she was taken all the time, and will marry her high school sweetheart. They say I inferred a lot from a little flirt.

Two-dimensional women are less trouble than the real thing. All aging perverts know that. Buying Danskins and laying them out on the bed. Blowing up inflatable dolls. Maybe McMurtry still thinks about his Texas bombshell. His pedestal girl. Maybe, like me, he has better luck with older women.

Here he comes now. Back down the black stairs. He's got a book tucked under one arm and is going back into the store. He looks up and sees me in the window of this condemned building. I wave. He nods back. Straightens a tuft of unruly hair. He doesn't recognize me but I studied with him a few years ago. McMurtry is walking around the store looking for something. Shuffling through piles of books and papers. The store is closed. And whatever it is, he's lost it. Frustrated, he sits down at the desk. Writes something down. looks out the window.

If I ever have a chance with Erin again...will I take it? She was innocent then. Unaware of her power. She's changed but still has the magic. Who knows? I still value her discolored false front tooth -- the only flaw I could find.

Lindy Magner

comings and goings

How you must have walked that day
across prairies tumbling in the wind
afraid of the gush if his eyes drilled yours

They say there are no trees
to diffuse the dawn light there
the sun as conspicuous as pregnancy

You watch him plow his fields
does he suspect the moon's waxing?
birds chase his tractor like you once did

He always planted watermelon for you
one small patch crawling
among rows of long-legged corn

You wished to save him from the hurricane
that would have come with summer
kicking like a restless child, had you stayed.

Michael Sobsey

Recession

I quit buyin' food
I started eatin' money
I found it was cheaper.

I traded a pint of blood
For a gallon of gas
Down at the Plasma Center.

When they raise the rent
I'll either move into the attic
Or invest in a tee-pee.

When I find some means of support,
I'll buy some land, an inch or two,
Up in the mountains.

The economists foresee
A mild recession in 1980,
Mild, mild, mild.

William Gorski

The Fly

The sun ripened through the window.

The boy heard some faint drone, like dying electricity. He knelt on the chair to look outside the window.

It was a fly, enclosed between the storm window and the screen. The fly was fat. Its eyes were a thousand and red. The boy saw only two dull bulges. In the sun, its body was a smart turquoise mirror.

The boy wondered how the fly could have flown there. No one opened any windows. It was March, still too cold for that. He buzzed back at the fly through the glass, establishing a common language.

Could the sun have stirred the fly from winter? He had heard that bears sleep in caves when it snows. Why couldn't flies fall asleep on window sills? Then in spring they could begin bothering people again. He thought of the supreme agitation that flies spurred in his parents. They even had things called "flyswatters" to "swat" them. It was like a game, but more like spanking.

Or maybe the fly penetrated the window from the outside and had forgotten how he entered. It was clear. If you could see through it then why couldn't you move through it?

His mother would be home soon. He would ask her, although he knew the type of answer she would find for him.

Whenever the world baffled him, whenever he viewed things through many pairs of crossed eyes, he felt the need for one solid answer to fill his body with affirmation.

He remembered one evening last summer, walking on the beach with his parents. The sun had set. As he splashed through the laces left by the waves, he wondered how far back the waves began. It was hard to see in this dark light. He saw something red at the far edge of the ocean. It rose like a flower. The red moon nudged above the water and floated there.

He was confused. Hadn't the moon always appeared out of the treetops in his backyard?

He asked his mother if the moon rose from the trees or from the water.

"Silly," she laughed. She explained that it only *appeared* to come from those places.

"Then *where* did it come from?"

"The sky."

"Why?"

"Wait until you grow up, then you'll understand."

These answers only frustrated him. It didn't seem fair. He felt the right to know. Everytime he discovered his thoughts were not the right ones, a vacancy filled their place. Then the need, that lip-biting need for one solid answer.

He foresaw his mother manufacture a like answer to the question of the fly.

He sighed, feeling that vacancy open up.

When the window was finally opened, maybe the fly itself would answer. Otherwise, he would have to wait for the understanding to arrive.

Kathy Bearden

Conductor

You tremble like a madman.
You move to save yourself
from crying;
you flail your arms
like Icarus falling
to save yourself from dying.
Push away that sound
before it drives you deaf.

You pull breath from strings,
you make them scream
and scrape like glass,
You make trumpets loud
like Easter morning.
You make voices bleed
in a beautiful, strained singing.
You make the sound
that wakes all dreamers.

Your face asks for more;
you form your hands to fists
to fight your pulsing war—
until it wins.
The fury you created hits you,
the ringing bricks you in.

You look like love,
or like making love,
or like someone loves you.
You look like a man
hanging on the cross
and loving it there.

Margaret Maruca, lithograph 10 ¾ x 14"

Brad McWilliams

Midnight Messiah

A crosslegged Buddha hums a mantra
they named a hamburger after;
his eyes clamped shut to see.
His prophets chant hymns
from Pioneer speakers.
He has found the Way
direct from the Book.
(six months a best seller).
Poised for transcending
he prays god he is He
and not indulging
a crucifiction complex.
He reshuffles his genes and tries again.
Jesus ate Wheaties.
(it says so on the box)
It takes a lot of Wheaties
to walk on water.
He lifts an eyelid,
(Nothing is happening)
Save soul saving for later,
time for TV and a tunafish sandwich.

Denise Summers

"The Meeting of St. Anthony and St. Paul"

—Sassetta and Assistant—

There are balding men with beige sticks
and immense grey and brown robes
and long beards and orange glowing spheres
around their heads.
One, holding two beige sticks, walks alone
between two green full forests
while another meets a creature
half-man, half-horse
clutching green sprigs
and holding his man-arms up high.
Two more men wear gold beads
and embrace
on the threshold of a dark cave
and have put aside their beige sticks.

We Question The Hawk

Do you think you were wrong?
- No. I sit on my disgust.
Why did you commit the offense?
- Because she wasn't thinking about it.
We don't understand.
- She was preoccupied with assuming life.
Oh. Were you afraid?
- Her existence was finite.
Were you afraid?
- I measure fear with her wings.
What was she like?
- She was afraid.
And did you desire this?
- I ate the ground she walked on.
What did it taste like?
- Her sweat.
We have here, as evidence,
a sworn statement to the effect
that you have never perspired.
Do you consider yourself intelligent?
- I make love to my books
Do they respond?
- Always.
Do they perspire?
- The pages stick together.
Getting back to the crime, at what point
did you notice her presence?
- I heard her swallow.
Then what happened?
- I tightened my circle above her
and dropped down.
You fell on her?
- I fell on her.

Did you take her far?
- To the birdbath, where I ate her.
Was there anything else?
- She was difficult.
How so?
- She tufted her feathers,
And what do you remember most about her?
- Her surprise and lovely afterbirth of sweat.

Kim Crutchfield, etching 11 ⅜ x 9 ½"

Patric Pepper

Delta Queen

for J.L.

You, Tropical Delta
Hip-hugging Queen,
hmm, I say
you, Lush Jungle,
Beckoning Green,
hmmm, I say,
hmmmm....
till I gaze
at silence again
and muse,
"Who could cast
your pure forms
into the air
but you?"
I hope to someday,
and sprouting into
failure for success
as much as love
let me just add—
when I go for a swim
in your warm estuary,
I forget my skin.

Matthew Arozian, *First Nude*, ink drawing 15 x 23"

Matt Westbrook

Collections

We see enough in our granite hands past holding
That the gripping wet sand is let fall
When like a fossil first it forms our own,
Our fall, our stone, our willing loss.

How the token assigned yesterday
An immobile sense should move
Should lift us into the well,
How the latest tracing of the shadow
Should drain all concentration
From obsession with opposites
Opening and open, the quickly forgotten
Stillness might have told us.

Though the demiurge in afterbirth
Is always, how can its bringing
Shoot from the anitgun when
All we believe we create
We destroy? How the disarrayed specimens
Depart from a careful regimen!

*

Always a pair of mounted angelwings
Torn in the brusque hunch and innuendo of lust.

*

Upon us in a minute hand
Could be inscribed with leaning characters
The meaning of a loss of will,
A copper dropped with half a glance
An offer to an unknown cause
Dropped with a twitch of the careless thumb:
Disruption, ripples, entombment in the dross,
Concealment at whatever cost.

What the reddening night articulates
Is here and now confined without
Is why we crouch in attic rooms
And box and wrap the lie without
A cause, storing and holding onto
The self, collecting ourselves for
The long display.

To be a closet insect being
In flight preposterous
Forever welcome in the showcase—
That the bulb waning in the empty room
Would be our measure beyond, never ceasing
To glimmer through minions of alternate blackness—
To be this stone forever falling,
To this we release our hoard,
Our ultimate leisure under glass.

Mokie Pratt, etching 11 ¾ x 8 ¾"

Larry Williams

The Ex-Waiter's Tale

This is the story of the biggest tip I ever made. It was a whale of a tip, and the man it came from was a lot like a whale himself. His name was Luigi Italian something, and he wore a necktie with more colors on it than you could find in the entire restaurant. He had a hat and a big stomach and a big family. He and his family sat down around the biggest table in the place and started shouting.

First they wanted two bottles of Dom Perignon. Since these bottles cost fifty dollars each, I began to take an interest in Luigi and his family.

Next they wanted many steaks—I forget how many—and plenty of shrimp and oysters, a rack of lamb, half a cheese, a medium chateaubriand, two pots of coffee.

"This is little Pietro's birthday," said Luigi, "Whataya think of that, huh, Sam?"

I looked at little Pietro. He was probably eleven. His eyes were round as saucers, dark as coffee. The family was congratulating him a lot, which meant they were smacking him a lot.

"He looks like a nice little boy, sir," I said. "Does he want a champagne glass?"

"Hell yeah," said Luigi. "He drinks it with his milk. Listen, Sam, this stuff's gonna be cold, am I right?"

"As cold as I can make it, sir."

"That better be *cold*," said Luigi. "I ain't paying a hundred bucks for piss."

He dismissed me by resuming an argument with his oldest son. I heard "David, you don't know what the hell you're talking about," and "The hell I do!" and a feminine voice saying "David, stop ruining your father's blood pressure. Be a good boy—let him win," with the part of my waiter's perception reserved for eavesdropping, as I went to the cellar with a key.

I made sure to pack the bottles in a great deal of ice.

Luigi was administering a lesson in manners to his two little girls when I returned with the bottles.

"Cindy, don't play with your food. It's disgusting. You don't think your mother and I care to keep disgusting people in the house, do you? No. That's right. Anabelle, I want you to hear this, too--"

The cork popped with the sound of a home run. Froth slid down the neck of the bottle and over my hand. There is nothing like the popping of a champagne cork. It will silence anyone and make him look.

Luigi was sizing me up when I brought out the desserts. His eyes had a rim of light around them, and for once, his relatives concentrated on the food. I could feel my back prickling under my jacket. The centers of Luigi's eyes were hard and shiny as anthracite. His wife patted the heads of the children.

"Gimme the check," said Luigi.

I underlined a figure on the check and handed it to Luigi. The figure I underlined looked like this: $245.

"What's your tip?" said Luigi.

"Thirty-seven dollars, sir," I said. "That is, if you tip properly." I spoke recklessly because I no longer cared whether Luigi tipped me or not. He was the kind of man waiters dream of having an accident around.

"Luigi," said his wife. "You promised never again."

"Shut up," said Luigi. "You were hysterical. I had to shut you up."

Luigi's wife got up and went out. Luigi's son David prevented his fork in midair from cutting his cherry pie.

"You're a pretty smartass waiter, Sam," said Luigi. "But I like your style. I'll bet you your tip that my boy can flip his pie plate in the air, without losing the pie, and catch it again."

"I'm sorry, sir--"

"Listen," said Luigi. "It's very simple. If my boy makes it, you don't get tipped. If my boy drops it, you get tipped double."

"You're crazy," I said, too stunned to remember that I wasn't supposed to tell my customers they were crazy—even though most of them were.

"You're wrong," said Luigi. "I'm not crazy, I'm smart. Are you gonna chicken out?"

"No." I said. "I'm betting."

Luigi smiled as though forceps were pulling at both sides of his face. David picked up his pie plate so abruptly the fork slid off. He clenched his jaw and flicked his wrist. He caught the pie in his hand. The plate fell to the floor. David's hand was red and gooey.

"Goddamit," said Luigi, shaking David by the shoulder. "You losing your nerve?"

David didn't answer. He was about fifteen years old and making some of the toughest decisions of his life.

"Get another pie, Sam," said Luigi. "I'm taking you on again, double or nothing." Luigi opened his wallet and pulled out three twenties, a ten and a five. "We're square—get another pie."

The second pie remained on its plate. Pie and plate fell to the floor like doomed lovers. The third pie landed on the tablecloth, as did the fourth, fifth and sixth. Each time Luigi ordered another pie and insisted that I bet him again, double or nothing.

Ten minutes later, David's forehead was drenched in perspiration

and his hand shook so that he could scarcely hold the plates. Luigi had taken to hitting David after each failure. Luigi owed me over three thousand dollars.

Ten or fifteen people had finished their dinners and now stood around the table in rapt amazement as David dropped pie after pie onto the floor or onto the tablecloth. The hostess fluttered by, but Luigi snapped at her and she withdrew to the ladies' room to seek comfort in solitude.

I stood in a cloud of my own potency. I was going to bankrupt Luigi Italian, bleed him white.

I don't know how long this would have gone on. A madness infected Luigi, and with each dollar he lost, he siphoned some of his madness into me.

"We're out of cherry pie," I said at last. "Do you want to bet me with blueberry?"

"Impossible," said Luigi. "David hasn't learned the trick with blueberry yet."

"He hasn't learned it with cherry yet, either," I said. "He is a lazy and stupid son," said Luigi. "But it must be cherry."

I searched the pantry and came up with one final piece of cherry pie.

Luigi accepted the news that this was the last slice with surprising equanimity.

"My luck has turned," he said. "I can feel it. My stupid son will get it right the last time, and for $7,872, which is double our last bet."

"Do it." I said to David.

David flipped the last plate. Pie and plate smashed on the floor, making a worse mess than Humpty Dumpty. Luigi screamed and hurled the chateaubriand knife at David, who fled the restaurant.

I made Luigi sign for my tip on the back of the check: $242 + $7,872 tip = $8,114. I decided to be nice and not charge Luigi for the $10 worth of pies his son had thrown on the floor.

"And what if David had actually caught the plate?" Said Luigi, throwing the signed check back to me. "You couldn't have paid me, could you Sam?"

"No, sir."

"Bastard." Said Luigi. "Let me tell you something. I make in an hour what you earn in a week."

"How fortunate," I said. "It certainly was a pleasure waiting on you. If you come back, I hope you'll ask for me."

After Luigi and his family left, I felt desperate and jubilant. I became absurd and flung the spoiled cherry pies at all my customers.

I told the cashier to mail my $7,872 tip to the general delivery in Honolulu and left as customers, their hair sticky with cherry sauce, pelted my backside with fish filets, chicken wings, filet mignons, anything that would fly.

David Hall

Spring Evening

Lying with you
Turning toward the moon
With this stream and bank of leaves
Time blooms in your breasts and face—
We are the green caress of moss,
The flocked blue, fused
With the hunter's shot that racks the air.

Kathryn Riley

Bach

You are the one sure cure for clutter--
Not very high praise for a master. And yet

When we are struck by the unholiness of now,
When dust lines the window of a sunless room,
Guardian of the stubbed cigarettes,
Yesterday's newsprint, misplaced keys,
When clutter spreads its powerful will
Dropping tin cans like soft bullets
Into the metal grey cylinder
Crammed with balled-up paper,
When the incidental becomes critical,

You stave off chaos with notes that fly upward,
Champions of perspective,
Laughing at the threats of mere objects,
Lighter than the air they ride upon.

Norma Seidel, *Salvador Dali*, pencil drawing 8 ¾ x 12 ¾"

Paul Juian Davis

Spring Work

I sweep the list of many things
I have to do. And I will sweep dirt
off the stoop and walkway
before I'll go after the fly-pocked web
over that window.
Dust and dirt oblige, pass into the pan,
but webs I have to climb for.
Mildew coats my old ties and stays
under hard scrubbing. Molds green
the loaf and they have won it.
Those hornets nested high in a cover over
the door demand a climb and a broomstick.
Things that breathe, disobey,
pretend to stand off, hiding, but all
the while defy. Somewhere, salmon sault
the churning falls, leaping blades of red
knifing back up the Fraser
toward the streamlets of their own
spawning, there to bleed in the pebbled
shallows and spawn the coming. Homing
violently this way, they would shout
over the stormy rapid to each other,
to see if he is still there,
to see if there is company
on the long drive home.
Things that breathe are stubborn.
I stop my scraping at the lichens
holding fast to the grouting.
These mosses at my knife-tip,
with the same breed of courage
as their leaping kin drive gloriously
against the tide,
fiercely hold still.

Melissa Bell

crickets.

Being in.
Being out.
Being an ogre.
Being a tooth.
Being more than a tooth.
Teeth.
Being a bone.
Jawbone-the chapel
of clicking enameled hides.
Being a head
impaled on a brain stem.
Being a hard head,
a brushed head,
a psychoanalytic head.
A head that sinks boats
and floods peoples' sandbags.
A head full of cluttered babies.
a head sneezing bricks,
a head surviving cremation,
a head spewing fallout,
a degenerate head.
A head rejected by bookends
for lack of proper diction.
A medieval head;
an earless head,
an eyeless head,
a noseless head-
a holy head.
A head curling up at the corners.
A hollow head echoing

Honey Ford Baptist

1

A priestly pour of ash and blue marrow
Rabbles over the rock at Cedar Creek,
Flows out and circles St. Helena
In a bitter demarcation of Bonaparte
In a gutter rite of Joyce:
Exiled on bright pine white highways
Boozed the dyer.

2

Spring of rose black brandy flints
And flames the mummy wrap of summer;
Spice beads of blood wheel
Ripe and tail the honeycomb heart;
Waves and waves of wardrobe
Strip to rib in the artery;
Hot Honey Ford's cool dole of cocaine
Won't blue the blood's quick stream:
The tiger fish, oceanic,
So love-longing in core and seam and eye,
Flays the ford lain sea,
Crushes his belly and pain
On the hard skin of God's land;
Minute and minute quivers, absolved.

3

Thick moving clouds gather all the modes of August;
All the holding, jointing wet of August
Dredged to the gulf gulped south,
To the sunken pressure of the gulf:
These weeds in crust still breed
In only the odor
Of steep thunder;
The muscle of mannered fields
Emaciates and peels from the rigor;
The piazza falls out under the chewn iron vines.

Mokie Pratt, etching 17 ½ x 23 ⅝"

Rod Jellema

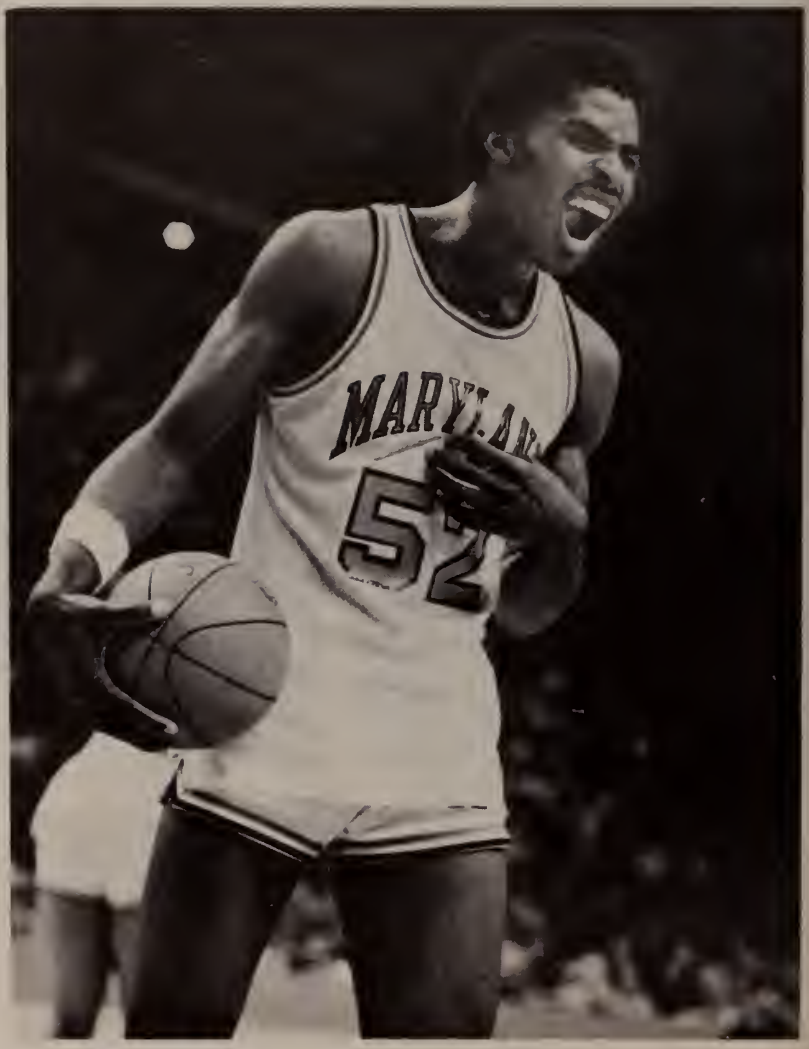
Ancestors

from *The Lost Faces*, Dryad Press

Their bloodlines curl in fur
far down the cells. At night
they stir, try to peer out
the slit in your eyes.

Softly they tip things
and quick as a cat you wake
to distortions and see
why Picasso painted at night.

Anne Rogers, *untitled*



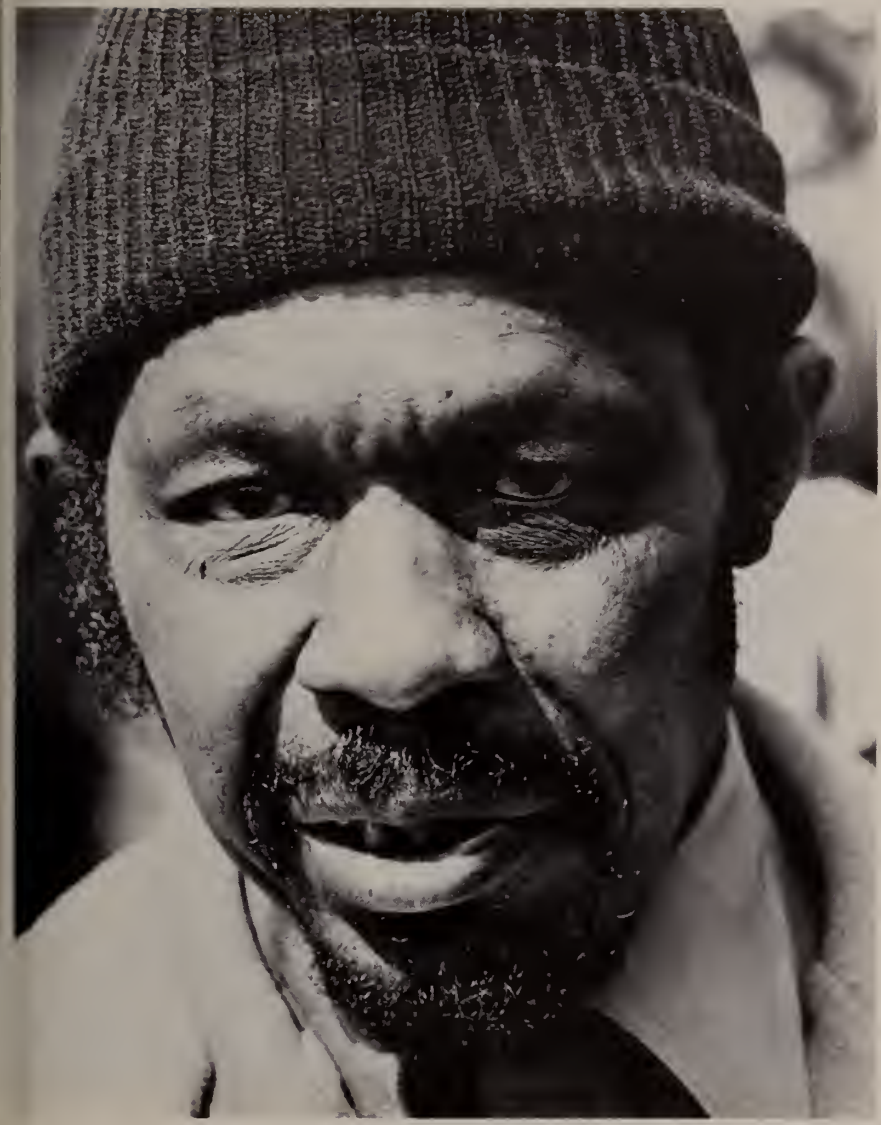
Martin Rodden, *Basketball*

Victor Wahby, *Murder*

Brian Kolling, *Temple of the Gods*

Steve Zerby, *Minneapolis Firefighter*

Karen Voss, *Fifth Avenue*



Alan Kresse, *Prophet*

Eileen O'Tousa, *Krumpelina*

For Gar

The dog grew thinner after he left.
There was something about food from a woman's hand
which displeased him.
She dreamed of its face.
Its paws clicked through her sleep,
and when she awoke he would look at her
as if she too should be searching.

It was a man's dog.
Too little firmness when you touched him.
and he would walk away.
On a sunny morning he would sit with his nose on the sill
watching for the car
or the sound of a gate opening
would send him to the top of the stairs to wait
with quiet dignity.

Eventually when the closets, the covers, and
even the cellar had failed to yield up
what he so desired he went to sleep,
circling himself near the desk,

and dreamed of a shallow grave
in the woods of dry leaves,
and his name called, echoing off the fields of winter wheat.

He always awoke when he heard the gunshot.
She never did.

Jennifer LaRue

Living Room

Waiting by the window a frog shakes his skin, warbling a waltz and tapping one foot. A roach on the floor in the opposite corner crawls too quickly for his stubby legs; he flips on his back and dances the shag in time to the frog's tune.

She looks at me hard, like she really doesn't like me. And I know she doesn't. Oh, she hasn't for days, maybe months. But that's all right, for she still stays and sways for me. I would miss her if she left; I've grown so used to the exact fit of her breast in my hand, and the tickle her feathers afford my shoulder.

Beautiful bitch. Her nose flinches slightly in irritation from cigarette smoke that slides from between her teeth. Tiny chips of clam-shell resting in their velvet-lined box. Someday they'll be found by some hackneyed anthropologist and he'll shout, "Eureka!" and become famous. And here I am, watching them dance as she speaks:

"It's too bad about Leonard. He was such a good guy. I wonder what came over him; he was never violent around us, was he?"

"I don't know; did you notice the way he carved the roast at New Year's dinner? Pretty ruthlessly, like he was going for blood."

"Well, that doesn't count. How else are you supposed to carve a roast?"

Fingers clamped around the butt of her cigarette, she fixes her eyes on my nose. Rarely will she do me the justice of looking into my eyes when I speak. A master of ill-ease, she's doing it again, challenging me. The frog quickens the pace of his melody, flat-footing frantically to keep up with his voice.

"Well, maybe not. But I'll tell you one thing: living with Samantha would sure bring out the violence in you. Talk about frustrating. The one mistake he made was getting himself in trouble this way, instead of just divorcing her. Would have been a lot easier in the long run."

"Maybe so." She eases a column of smoke from her nostrils, directing it toward the roach in the corner, who still squirms helpless on his back. "But still, Leonard was always such a sweetheart. I don't see how anything Sam could have done would have bothered him so much that he'd kill her. I mean, get mad, even slap her, but kill her? It just doesn't make sense."

She's lighting another damned cigarette. Wraps her thick nigger-lips around the end, probably getting it all slimy. And there goes her nose again. Lord, that's annoying. Can't she control it? She probably can, and she goes on doing it because she knows it bothers me.

"Well, it might not have been just one thing. It could have been something building up over the years, and just one little move on her part triggered it off. I can see it happening."

She still won't look into my eyes; she inspects her long sleek nails, admires her stockinged toes as she wriggles them in their sandals. Everything intrigues her but me. She gets up, heading for the wine closet in its smoky corner. Her ass is getting fat; that ass that used to ripple real cute and girlish when we'd dance. Now it's all baggy. She got a book of exercises for it, but she never does them. Too damed lazy. Sits around and drinks my wine, smokes her cigarettes all day long.

"Get a knife and cut me some cheese. I want some cheese and crackers with my wine."

I enter the kitchen and lift a long, bright-shafted blade from the rack on the wall. I turn it in my hand and remember Leonard's carving the roast as light from the back window glints from the mirrored surface. The frog on the windowsill has ceased his orchestrations and has plunged into the room, hopping systematically towards the roach, who wriggles uncomfortably, flapping his tiny wings.

She turns to me and screams, her tongue stretching long and lean from somewhere deep in the cavern of her throat.

The frog laps his prey up in his lips, which he then smacks quietly as he rests contentedly on his hauches.

Robert Farr

for years and years

for years and years
they lived face to face,
perpetually speaking the truth,
never, but never, dressing in the dark:

it was a simple existance,
something that spoke of chrysanthemums;
tall, spreading elms; blue skies.
something that lied like a Rockwell painting.

then, one day long before
they *knew* it would happen,
the colors fell like wounded men

the trees and flowers all died of blight;
a sultry band of outlaws came and stole
the clear blue right out of the sky.

now, they live in fear of the darkness.
the nightlight is always on.
she gives him a peck on the cheek
as he leaves:

Margaret Maruca, *Clowns*, lithograph 10 ⅜ x 13 ¼"

The Pied Piper's Second Coming

for R.J.

No doubt he will have his way
and make our children his by virtue
of his fluted metaphors, his flashing eyes
and waving hair. They will not hear
the tragic strain in his looping notes
because their ears are deaf to any music
not their own. Therefore he will lead them
in his manic dance street by street
and town by town toward a precipice
they'll never see before they plunge
to their final vision and he dances
over their heads. When they have passed
beyond the brink and he has scaled to fame,
who will thank our piper for his pains?

Chandelier Lady

Four waiters,
dirty linen towels
tucked neatly over their arms,
whisper about the lady
in the back row,
her asparagus toes,
crystal elbows;
her gin throat
swells like a walnut.

Meanwhile, nodding importantly,
listening with a lizard's
closed mouth,
her father blesses
a congregation of bread,
holds a bruise-black highball.

She, moony as china,
turns a darker side up.
Her buzzer cry
lays blame
on that straight spine.
She bleeds a rainbow
under the table
and tips her feet too late.
They crack
disturbing the city luncheon trade.

She, nonchalant as possible,
chews her roast beef
perfectly.

Paul Mandelbaum

Tender is My Nose

"Speak slowly, dearest. I'm trying to get all this down."

—F.Scott Fitzgerald to Zelda on their wedding night.

Whitney Kayne never held a working man's job for a day in his languourous life. Rather, when he wasn't the subject of books, he took to writing them himself, and had managed to keep in the lofty and spiritually opulent style that his parents had beared to part with when they died a good ten years ago. He was by no means rich in the traditional sense; his liquid assets had long since evaporated, leaving behind the gathered silt of abandoned dreams and poor long term investments. But his manner and grace were tempered with the refined breeding of his gentlemanly father who would always quote Burns and Brooke and who would on occasion don suede underwear at parties.

Whitney shared a modest flat in the West Sixties with his uncle and aunt from his father's side—their veneer caressed with the same rich oils of elegance—who, because of their fortuneless state of affairs, were forced to eat dog food. Once Uncle Clarence caught tetanus from a severe cut to the lip he suffered trying to sip champagne from a tin can. But he was comforted knowing that the can was imported—tin coming from the mountains of Bolivia.

Whitney Kayne's one extravagant pronouncement to rich debutantes everywhere was his swift red coupe which he drove whenever he went as far as a few blocks. He had bought it with the entirety of his parents' modest inheritance, and he drove it with the reckless zealousness of a man who had nothing to leave behind to anybody.

As it was his day to go to the bank and make a deposit or withdrawal or whatever rich people do by themselves, Whitney took his place in the drive through line. There he saw a pale, light angel counting out twenties in her glass booth. She had Spanish olive eyes with red pimento centers, and as she pressed the intercom button she whispered hello to Whitney.

"Hello," he answered, noticing her struggle with a spirited piece of chewing gum. "How long have you been working here?"

"I just started last week. My daddy owns the place."

"He does, really?"

"He owns a whole chain of banks. Came into it all kind of sudden too." She was pulling the sinuous gum between her fingers, and her round face followed wherever the stubborn ligament willed it. He learned that her family lived on East Fifty-second Street, and that her name was Trust—Sabrina Trust.

Suddenly Whitney was consumed with a passionate desire to kiss her. She looked as if she wanted to be kissed—her lips were chapped, and raw, and bleeding in places as if she had been kissed before.

"Sabrina," he cried. "I want to submerge my entire being within you!"

"Yes," she gasped. "Submerge your entire being within my entire being and we'll have enough being to fill a kiddie pool!" She leaned toward him, her mutilated lips puckered and her puffy eyes weighted down by their cargo of mascara. Eyelashes, Whitney always felt, were the Venetian blinds to the soul, and hers were so beckoning, so elusive behind their painted curtains that he desperately wanted to part her shades.

"Oh, now," she murmured. Whitney leaned out of his red coupe, and their young supple bodies wavered toward one another. They would have kissed had the glass booth not been between them.

"Sabrina Trust," thought Whitney as he drove away. He would call on her again, perhaps after the war.

Whitney, who enlisted in the army because the uniform brought out his ruddy eyes, went to fight in Europe. But as an enemy bullet was thrashing its way toward his heart, the armistice was signed suddenly, and Whitney was spared.

He came home only to find his aunt and uncle had passed away from rabies. They had both been bitten by a stray German shepherd they were training to be a polo pony. Whitney found them lying in the lobby, froth rushing from their gaping mouths—the carnation in Uncle Clarence's button hole was fresh, because before he died, he had made arrangements with the florist to have it changed once a week. Whitney quickly prepared for the funeral, and realizing he didn't have the money to pay for it, retreated to his apartment where he was depressed for three years.

One morning as Whitney was scanning the society page of the New York Times, he came across a wedding announcement: Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Trust the First announce the wedding of their daughter Sabrina to...She was to be married the next day, and Whitney felt devastated. The last hope of life had been rung from his heart, and, grabbing his hat and coat, he burst out the door on his way to nowhere.

Five o'clock found him in the bar of the Plaza Hotel drowning his depression in a sea of highballs. A pallor had set into his otherwise rosy cheeks, and his violent fingers stabbed at his oppugnant hair.

An hour later, Whitney showed up on the Trust's doorstep, where a pert French maid made him wait in the foyer of a very fashionable East Side apartment while she "fetched" her mistress. Sabrina soon emerged from the parlor, tugging one Master Reginald Cashiere close behind her.

"Hullo S'brina. I'm Whintey Kayne, you 'most kiss'd me a' the bank three yurs 'go." He was concealing his drunkenness with little success.

"Whitney Kayne, is it? Well, this is my fiancee Reginald. Reginald, Whitney; Whitney, Reginald. I'm going to stir up some Kool Aid while you boys get to know each other..."

"Nobody's gonna marry Mix Trus' b't me!" cried Whitney who flew at Reginald Cashiere, but was put off when a hot fire poker caught him in the eye.

"Back off," cried Reginald, blowing cool the firey tip of the iron, "or I'll put out your other eye. I'm quite good with one of these you know." Then, feeling a bit of compassion or perhaps pity, he handed Whitney a ten dollar bill and added, "Sorry, old sport. But you had it coming." Reginald let the door close softly behind him, and Whitney crawled over to a haughty Sabrina Trust and looked up at her with a gloomy eye.

"S'brina I know the m'ment I a'most kizzed you I luv you. Marry me." He looked pathetic on his hands and knees waiting for Sabrina's firefly voice to light on him. "Wha zat you say, S'brina?"

"I didn't say anything, I was burping," she replied with exasperation.

"Oh my flow'r," he crooned. "You burp like muzik. Marry me."

And because the flighty Sabrina had grown cold to her lover Reginald, and because she remembered with reserved fondness the gay, impetuous, madcap lad who begged for her glassy kiss three and a half years ago, she agreed now to marry Whitney. She scribbled the address of the First Bilphist Church on a slab of cream cheese and handed it to him.

"Be there at 2 p.m. and dress proper," she said holding the door open, the waves of her hair crashing over the beach of her forehead from the storm in her eyes.

"Yez S'brina. I luv you."

It was as garish a ceremony as could have been dreamed—the ballroom of the First Bilphist Church of Manhattan was decked out in five thousand dollars worth of crepe paper streamers. There was a lavish spread on the center table, not the least noticeable addition being a large chopped liver hogshead spewing a river of cranberry juice out its upturned nostrils. The Trusts, lacking in all but the most rudimentary social graces, had decided to hold the reception before the ceremony.

Sabrina met Whitney and led him toward her father. She looked lovely in her wedding gown, Whitney thought, but the black veil disagreed with him.

"A pleasure, Kayne," said Mr. Trust extending a hairy vice around Whitney's victimed hand. "Not rented you know," Trust said, refering to his own tuxedo.

The reception lasted for eight hours, and after everyone had eaten his fill and become roaring drunk, Trust rapped his silverware on the table and told everyone to proceed to the chapel for the ceremony. All took their places except Sabrina who was throwing up in the bathroom , but Whitney and the priest were both so drunk, that the unwitting Mr. Kayne became wed to a bus maid who was passing close by with a tray of dirty dishes. Whitney and his new bride, who was quite flattered at the sudden proposal, got into his sporty coupe and drove off to their honeymoon retreat in St. Paul, and it was a good few hours before Sabrina and her parents realized they had been gypped out of a wedding.

"Don't be upset, my kitten," said Trust hungrily to his weeping daughter. "you'll spend your wedding night with me."

One morning four years later, Whitney woke up next to his wife, and for the first time realized that he had married the wrong girl. They had been living at a swank country club on Long Island all this time, and never once did he suspect his error. This young flower, pretty as she was, had no Spanish olive eyes with red pimento centers.

"Oh, my God!" thought Whitney. "What could I have been thinking?" He felt the violent torment in his stomach - a stomach that had just tasted the botulistic chili of disillusioned ambition. Whitney pulled on his slippers and walked over to the window. It was a cloudy autumn morning and he could see the supple breats of an eighteen hole golf course before him--on the ninth hole were two old men getting in a quick round before lunch. One of them, seeing Whitney in the window, beckoned his partner and pointed.

"You see that man?" he demanded. "That's Whitney Kayne. He used to be a successfull philanthropist, but now he's looking out that window over there."

continuity

she left that morning
with the smell of his
wet skin,

wearing it like a cloud
to the office
where it wrestled with the dust
on index cards, the telephone's
plastic, the night watchman's
cigarette butts that told her
nothing about him—that man.

she had trouble
shaking things off, yet the meeting
was capsule of forgetfulness
dissolving partially in her mouth.

still, though, he came through.
like the painting
beneath the painted—when she
crossed her legs neatly
under the table or doodled
subconsciously on her note paper:

mouths, faces,
razor blades

because last
she saw him shaving
with no past or future,
as though nothing had happened
or ever would again.

she envied him that. yet
by night she too forgot,

planting blackberries,
chasing great purple circles
in dreams. bursting them
for juice and spilling it
upon the clean, white linen

where now no one but she
was sleeping.

Mokie Pratt, etching 11 ¾ x 11 ¾"

tremor

We'd been together all weekend
sitting in hospitals or watching tv
we were sitting close, I was talking
into your ear intently. When we
went out and walked, we went on for miles
trudging thru the slop & slush, evading
the 18 inches of white from
the '79 Washington's Day Dump. We were
coming back, and were getting close
the metro underpass with all the tw
isting steps that keep falling back on
each other in the puddles and shadows—
the sodium crimelights peering down thru the
stairwells of peeling iron railings
we knew they weren't just walking behind us
we knew they weren't catching up just to pass
we knew then they'd been behind us a long while
we knew they were in jackets and chucks for a reason
it was something in the breathing and even
tho it was getting dark we could still feel
the current coursing thru the wires hanging over
the tracks, My mind trying to make up lost time
I should go for their groins and insteps
and yell for you to run, you could run to my sisters
run for beyond that stand of trees—the yellow houses
on the perimeter setting grayer in the settling dusk
I would only be able to yell the address once
I hoped to God you'd catch it...I let you get
a few steps ahead before I wheeled about swing-
ing my body with an invisible Ax—
The instant I could I cried 186-b Cloverdale Terrace
Salisbury, Maryland 21723 my heart set
when you stood there riveted blue, unable to move
freezing harder each second to the ground underfoot
the fault in the walk between us rifting apart dizzily

Stephanie Croyder, *Maryland Fall Sunset*, etching 5 ⅞ x 7 ¼"

War Wheel

and in new and brighter prospects
we are entering the war of the 80's
finally with the Ruskies to tangle over grease
for our fouling wheels
and in all the hate and loss of sons
may new ramparts be squeezed out
and a mighty new emblem eternal emerge
war forever like muscle between the fat hard
saved in the heat and the hammer
a baptism in steel, confirmed by fire
once more reformed
a new dignity forged from the tears and the shrapnel
and the Spartans knew it and the Romans knew it
and Goebbels must have known it when he said
iron makes the nation hard
butter just makes us fat

Nancy Ford-Young

While Listening To Segovia...

I

Outside is rain and wind
I hear them distantly
I am in Spain in a golden warm place
The only water I know
Shoots up sparkling from a fountain.

The wind does not rave
Rather it caresses gently,
The music invades my thoughts
Guitar strings weave a content blanket
Somewhere, wind and rain
But not with me, now.

II

A box, six strings and some fingers
is that all
And from the blending of these
There comes such sound?
I looked for a gaudy blaze
As I ran to see
You are quiet brown.
I heard red, flashing yellow and purple.

Failure To Travel

One needs to go places.
For what has one given
to widening day?
What thing, new and opaque?
One has little to say.
Nothing comes easy
to one so full of voices.
Even one's breathing shocks.

One doesn't like this black flower.
One fails to love this black door,
these black lungs.
One is poor.
One sings, one's songs
fly from windows.
And the mind echoes conversation:
"From your collar, sir, I infer
a shirt,"
"the trees moved,
the sky stiffened and fled,"
or other such snatches of word
said, word voiced.
In the round vast of a name,
all is a chance, an easing.

One who is to spin,
who is to taste of many pears,
how haunted then?
One reaches a slow center.
Stairs climb;
one has no shadow.
One is dispossessed.
Known in a mirror,
shed by same.
And enclosed.

Peter Muldoon, lithograph 11 ¾ x 14 ¾"

Meeting for Coffee

The arc of your arm in the act
of lifting the cup
separates the space between us

even before we have begun.
You engage the conversation
with a lift of eyebrow.

I don't try, the effort scares me;
you exhale and start again,
shifting on the chair.

I see the knee that peeks out
of your skirt. It says most of
what I want to hear,

but I will listen to your mouth
because you would have it that way.
You spot the empty cup;

grateful for incidentals,
we busy ourselves in its direction—
I hold steady and you pour.

Morris Wilkes
was an exceptional child
with an abnormally large head
who said
'so i am told'
replying to each inqiry
on how it felt
to be a prodigy
at the age of three
grandmothers and relatives pressed close
whispering 'you are a gifted child
with great expectations'
'so i am told'
he said repeatedly
until they left the room, shut the door and put out the light
then, lifting himself onto the bed
crackling in his aluminium foil underwear
sits bolt upright upon his stumps
and stares at you
with insane crying eyes
from behind the chain link fences
of your lawns.

Krystyna Wasserman

The Girlfriend

Elisabeth, Madonna with long neck
Sold her camera.
Debts were growing like children of butterflies. Fast.
Elisabeth smiles and kills the butterflies
Elisabeth is cruel.
Elisabeth, Madonna with long neck
Shot herself.
She had to. Debts were growing like children of butterflies.
She would prefer to drown but was afraid of water in the river

Jerry M. Cohen

Fall

Morning, a day-dream
The leaves changed to red, and fell.
I wake easy now

Time might be weighty
My sister with child today, while
Old friend telephones.

Kids, they have no time
I know better, and labor
For trifles all night.

We should be happy
To release our innocence
For a worthy guilt.

Contributors

***Matt Arozian** is a senior studying visual communications. ***Richard Ballard** is a poet living in Silver Spring, Md. ***Dan Bell** plays guitar with local D.C. bands, and is a '75 graduate of UMCP. ***Melissa Bell** is a June '79 graduate of UMCP with a BA in English. ***Jerry Cohen** is a senior at UMCP majoring in English. ***Billie Cowell**, a Physical Therapist, is a graduate of the University of Illinois. ***Stephanie Croyder** is a junior majoring in Advertising Design at UMCP. ***Kim Crutchfield** is a junior Advertising Design major at UMCP. ***Paul Julian Davis** is a junior Economics major at UMCP. ***Nancy Ford-Young** is a MA candidate in the Health Education Department at UMCP. ***William Gorski** is a graduate student in English at UMCP, and former poetry editor of *Calvert*. ***William Griffiths** teaches creative writing at UMCP. ***Rod Jellema** heads the creative writing department at UMCP. ***Brian Kolling** is a senior RTVF major at UMCP. ***Alan Kresse** is the photo editor of *Terrapin*. ***Jennifer LaRue** is a sophomore English major at UMCP. ***Paul Mandelbaum** is the editor of *Argus* magazine. ***Margaret Maruca** is studying art at UMCP. ***Lynn Massover** is a poet living in the Fiji Islands. ***Brad McWilliams** is a sophomore majoring in Biology at UMCP. ***Peter Muldoon** has had several showings of his art in the Washington area. ***Richard Peabody** is the editor of *Gargoyle* magazine. ***Eileen O'Tousa** is a junior at UMCP studying Advertising Design. ***Christian Peek** is a senior majoring in Sociology at UMCP. ***Patric Pepper** has a beard and lives in Turkey Thicket, D.C. ***Mokie Pratt**, a recent graduate of Bennington, is printing at the Corcoran Gallery and is a staff member of the Writer's Center. ***Ruthellen Quillen** teaches creative writing at UMCP. ***Kathryn Riley** teaches English at UMCP. ***Martin Rodden** is photography editor for *It* magazine, and a *Diamondback* staff photographer. ***Anne Rogers** is a photographer for the *Montgomery Journal*. ***Norma M. Seidel** is a senior studying Studio Art at UMCP. ***Michael Sobsey** is a fall '79 graduate of UMCP with a BA in English. ***Denise Summers** is a junior Journalism major at UMCP. ***Paul Trimble**, a recent graduate of UMCP, teaches experimental offset at The Writer's Center. ***Karen Voss** is a junior majoring in Art History at UMCP. ***Victor Wahby's** photography took the top awards at "Artists Today." He is a senior studying Speech and Hearing at UMCP. ***Krystyna Wasserman** is a graduate student in Art History at UMCP. She is doing her Master's Thesis on George Bellows. ***Matthew Westbrook** is a junior studying English and Philosophy at UMCP. ***Larry Williams** is a junior English major at UMCP, and the fiction editor of *It* Magazine. ***Robert Whisler** is a poet living in Glenn Burnie, Md. ***Mark Zeender** is a junior majoring in English at UMCP. ***Steve Zerby**, a recent transfer student from the University of Minnesota, is a fourth year Journalism student at UMCP.

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